

Guidelines for use of Bridging Funds for Research Staff

Background

The University has demonstrated and been rewarded for its commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers through the HR Excellence in Research Award, which was obtained by the University of Sussex in April 2013. As part of its on-going work to oversee the University's efforts to uphold the principles of the Concordat, the University's Research Staff Working Group examined the following recommendation of the Concordat:

“Organisational systems must be capable of supporting continuity of employment for researchers, such as funding between grants, other schemes for supporting time between grant funding”

The Research Staff Working Group agreed that for transparency of decisions it would be useful to have University level guidance for the appropriate use of bridging funds for research staff. The guidelines were subsequently approved by SMG in March 2015.

Guidelines

It is the expectation that Principle Investigators should plan their funding strategy to ensure continuity of employment for researchers. However in exceptional circumstances, instances may arise where there would be a break in funding between consecutive research grants. In such circumstances it may be appropriate to use School funds (where available) to bridge research staff contracts to retain key staff.

Use of funds for bridging research staff contracts is at the discretion of the Head of School and should conform with the following guidelines:

- Bridging funding is appropriate to retain key research staff in a situation where a research grant that would employ the staff member at the University of Sussex has been awarded (as evidenced by written communication from the funding organisation), but is not due to start immediately. [N.B. In cases where the status of the funding is unclear, the Head of School should refer to the Research and Enterprise Division for guidance via the Research Staff Officer]
- The period of bridging funding should not exceed six months in duration.
- The staff member should take all periods of leave accrued prior to and during the bridging funding period before the end of the bridging period.
- The researcher and manager should jointly propose a set of expectations/objectives to be achieved during the bridging period, to be agreed by the Head of School prior to agreement of bridging funds (examples might include; publications, work on another project, feasibility studies, teaching, mentoring etc).
- The Head of School must be notified immediately should any circumstance change with respect to the awarded research grant that is to employ the researcher at the end of the bridging period.
- The Head of School reserves the right to terminate bridging funds if the agreed conditions are not being met at any point during the bridging period.